

LOUISIANA WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES COMMISSION

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P R O C E E D I N G S

BOARD MEETING

Tuesday, May 2, 1978

10:00 o'clock a.m.

Hilton Inn  
Cypress Room  
Kenner, Louisiana

Kathryn G. Chamberlin,  
Reporter.



Helen R. Dietrich, inc.  
*Stenotypists*

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P R O C E E D I N G S

. . . Pursuant to notice, a special meeting of Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission convened at 10:00 o'clock a.m. on Tuesday, May 2, 1978, in the Cypress Room, Hilton Inn, Kenner, Louisiana, Doyle G. Berry, Chairman, presiding. . . .

PRESENT WERE:

DOYLE G. BERRY, Chairman  
DONALD F. WILLE, Vice Chairman  
MARC DUPUY, JR., Member  
J. C. GILBERT, Member  
JEAN LAPEYRE, Member  
HARVEY CLAY LUTTRELL, Member  
CHARLES RIGGS, Member.

A G E N D A

1. Approval of Minutes of March 21, 1978. (4)

DR. LYLE ST. AMANT

2. Setting of spring shrimp season. (5)

OTHER BUSINESS

The following items not on the printed agenda were also considered:

Joint Senate-House Resolution re crabbing  
in Lake Pontchartrain.

(45

May meeting dates of Commission.

(49

Request by Vicon, Inc. for renewal of permit  
to remove fill material from the Mis-  
sippi River at Hahnville, St. Charles  
Parish, Louisiana.

(49

Request by Louisiana Land and Water, Inc.,  
for permits to dredge sand and gravel  
from the bed of the Mississippi River  
at eight sites.

(50

Discussion of webbing sizes.

(58

ADJOURNMENT

(60



CHAIRMAN DOYLE G. BERRY: We will call the meeting to order now. Will you please take your seats.

As I am sure you know, Dr. St. Amant is here to discuss the setting of the brown shrimp season with you. Of course, we had the input on it yesterday, and Mr. Luttrell, I wish you would check your guns today. (Laughter)

Really we are glad to have you with us and I want to welcome you. We like to have this input. It doesn't really bother us when some guys get up and get a little bit mouthy. If that is what it takes to express themselves, we want them to and we are glad for them to do it. As I said yesterday, we are well overpaid for this job at \$25 a day, so we are going to hang in here.

The first item on the agenda, Dr. St. Amant, is approval of the minutes of March 21. I will accept a motion for that now.

MR. WILLE: I will move.

MR. RIGGS: Second.

THE CHAIRMAN: Moved by Mr. Wille, seconded by Mr. Riggs. All in favor say aye.



IN UNISON: Aye.

THE CHAIRMAN: Any opposed?

(No response)

So ordered.

Dr. St. Amant.

DR. LYLE ST. AMANT: Mr. Chairman and Members of the Commission, I don't think it will be necessary to go through the exercise that we did yesterday. All of you were here. I would like to repeat for the record, however, the basic information that we have developed and from this and from what you heard yesterday, you may be in a position to make a decision on when to open the spring shrimp season.

I think I would like to repeat the facts that, one, last year we had an exceptional year, probably a year out of 20 or 30 or 40 or 50, and it is not likely to be repeated. It could happen. Anything can happen, but it is not likely that it is going to happen with that amount of production.

Secondly, this year we are faced with some peculiarities in climatic situations. We have had a rather long, cold winter. This has

affected the growth rate of the shrimp, and really our ability to pick up the young shrimp was delayed because when it is quite cold we are not very able to get what we need to count in the early stages.

Nevertheless, things turned out in my opinion much better than we might hope for. The first thing is that the number of shrimp in the area, surprisingly enough, appears to be equivalent or greater than 1976, which was quite a good year, and at least at the present time our catch rates fall somewhere between 1976 catch rates at this time and the 1977 catch rate. We are not anywhere up close to '77. We were catching 250 to 300 shrimp per sample in 1977, and we are catching around 150 to 200 per sample now, but this is still well above some of the bad years we had like 1974 when we were averaging less than 50 shrimp per sample, so you are looking at a pretty good crop and we hope they hold up.

We could have another good year and if this is true we may be home free with two or three years of high production and possibly high prices.

The thing that we don't like about 1978

is the size of the shrimp. The size at the present time is running a little bit better than half the size they were last year at this time. In other words, in 1976 and '77, we were looking at shrimp in late April and early May that were running about, oh, two and a half inches long, and this is about a 400-count shrimp and they were able to make it up into a pretty reasonable marketable size by the middle of May. In 1978 we are running considerably smaller. We are only running about an inch and a half in size or an inch and three-quarters. Now this indicates to us that if the weather stays like it is and we don't get any sudden real hot spells that stay with us for several weeks that the shrimp will be quite small and probably will not reach a size that is really usable, at least on the average, until fairly late in the month.

Now, based on this information, we have made some projections. We have made these projections every year. We are usually fairly close on these projections. That doesn't mean that they haven't changed this thing from time to time.

Now our present projections indicate

that on May 8 we would only have about two percent of the shrimp that were marketable. On May 15 we would have about 16 percent of the shrimp that were marketable. This is a pretty small shrimp even at that. We are talking about a 100-count shrimp head-on. On May 22 our projections indicate 40 percent marketability and May 29 66 percent marketability.

This could change. If it stays cold it might not get any better than it is right now, it may slow it down some. If it warms up, it could speed it up some. I doubt seriously whether we could bring it up to the 50 percent mark much sooner than some time between the 15th and the 22nd.

Based on these data, we recommended yesterday and I still recommend today that we think the earliest date we should open is the 22nd and we recommend the 22nd for Zone 2, which is the central section. The eastern and western zones, 1 and 3, seem to have a good supply of very small shrimp and we are recommending the 29th in these areas.

Mr. Chairman, this is the best information that we are able to offer you at this time.

THE CHAIRMAN: Gentlemen, you have heard the recommendations.

MR. LUTTRELL: I so move.

THE CHAIRMAN: I would like to know if anybody in the audience has any input or would like to make a comment at this time about the proposed dates. Any objections to it? Yes, sir. Would you come up to the podium and state your name.

MR. MILTON DUDENHEFER: I am President of the East Bank Commercial Fishermen's Association.

I would like to kind of repeat what I said yesterday and add a little bit to it. We would like to see the season in Area 1 open on the 29th with a 60-day season and a possibility of an extension as long as the small white shrimp don't show up, that the biologists keep a close count on it, and as soon as the white shrimp show up at a point that there would be any problem that we would close down the season immediately.

By going to the later date and going through with a longer season it would be more beneficial to the fishermen and I feel that the shrimp would have a little more chance to grow in Area 1 since they grow a little bit slower in Area 1 than they do in Area 2.

I would like to thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, sir. We appreciate your input.

This gentleman (indicating) had his hand up first. We will get to you in just a minute.

MR. DOUGLAS COUTURE: I am President of Southeast Louisiana Commercial Fishermen's Association. We live in Zone 1, the same as Mr. Dudenhefer.

We feel as though the shrimp in our area is running a whole lot bigger at this time of the year than what they was running last year and we also think that the season should be opened on the 22nd of May statewide for everyone. That way if they have a bumper crop or anything, we would have a problem to get rid of our shrimp and everything because most of us are with dealers down in that

area, we have factories that we go to, and these factories, if they open on the other side of the river, these factories are loading up with shrimp from the other side of the river, where if we don't have any production we usually wind up by staying out in the cold.

So, we would like to have it opened on the 22nd statewide. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your recommendation.

I don't know who this guy is, coming to the mike now. I have never seen him before.

MR. LEROY AUTHEMENT: Well, I will tell you, Mr. Berry, this is Leroy Authement from Terrebonne Parish, Zone 2.

I am in agreement with Dr. St. Amant in part of what he stated on the growth of the shrimp this year. It is a little retarded from what it was last year but as far as the amount in my area, I have been keeping close tab on them since the 15th of March.

Now as far as the brownie is concerned, what I have seen is equal or better than what it

was last year, and as you all recall, last year I strongly recommended the second and I well stipulated what happened would occur, and today I will do the same recommendation. The only thing I ain't going to recommend the second because I am not ready to go to work tonight. But I would recommend, and ask you all to take it in strong consideration, because by what has been going on in my area I can foresee what we had last year if it is opened on the 22nd.

I am in strong recommendation for the 15th and a strong stipulation to close it either the 3rd or the 4th of July again this year for our August crop, because last year our August crop was triple or better than triple what it was in '75 and '76 late closing dates.

In my area what we got to take under consideration on production coming in, we have over 100 new boats in Terrebonne Parish that hit the water since December and we have but one ice factory that went up, so in all indication by the production I have seen and right now what we have plenty of in Terrebonne Parish is a crop of white

shrimp about a 40-50 count that is plentiful right now. Last year we had a few shrimp. Like you all remember the few white ones I brought last year was extremely pretty shrimp.

THE CHAIRMAN: They had freezer burns on them!

MR. AUTHEMENT: Not only a freezer, we had a factory, too, that burned down in Terrebonne Parish.

MR. WILLE: Leroy, how many barrels have you sampled? How many sample barrels have you gotten out?

MR. AUTHEMENT: I ain't got no sample barrels. I just check them in the water and turn them loose! I don't pick them up!

(Laughter)

But if I had only picked them up, I would have a good season made the 15th of March.

Like Dr. St. Amant said, foreseeing unnatural occurrence, I can see the same thing as last year if it is on the 22nd because we have a new moon on the 18th or the 19th and when you are coming up on your full moon, if you have any kind



of north wind, that shrimp will migrate out. As you recall last year, it hit on the night of the 10th of May and between the 11th and the 14th, there was over 2,000 barrels that was dockside for Monday morning, the opening of the season, to be worked. That ruptured the stock ice that was left in stock and then by the time the factories aren't choked with those 2,000 barrels, we had over 5,000 barrels that came back in so that didn't relieve the pressure at all.

So, like Dr. St. Amant said, we have a lot of things to take under consideration, but I think that if we open any later than the 15th we would be hurting our May season because I can see a repetition right now of what we had last year, and we are hurting our fall season. If we open on the 15th, we can close it on the 3rd because last year we opened on the 16th and we closed it on the 4th. Nobody starved.

So, gentlemen, I strongly recommend that Area 2, anyway, is ready as far as crop of white shrimp, it would be ready to open today but then we would be making too much of a devastation in our

brownie crop, but by the 15th the brownies in Terrebonne Parish in my area will be running under 100 to the pound. As you all remember last year, on the 26th of April, I brought some shrimp of 89 to the pound and at the same area on the 16th they were 99 to the pound what I caught and sold.

THE CHAIRMAN: Those first ones had freezer burns on them!

MR. AUTHEMENT: Well, that's rough! I will let you try to figure it out!

But, in all honesty, I wish you all would give strong consideration to opening it on the 15th and stipulate it close on either the 3rd or the 4th of July, because with the production I can see what we will have, around the 3rd or the 4th of July, everybody is ready for a rest for the August season. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Let me say I appreciate your input and I can see perhaps why you have the opinion you do. However, nobody else has come before the Commission yesterday or today that apparently wants to open before the 22nd. You are the only man I know of who has recommended it.

Is that right, Doc? I didn't hear any input yesterday.

DR. ST. AMANT: Nobody has mentioned anything. I would like to make a couple of points, though.

THE CHAIRMAN: Go right ahead, sir.

DR. ST. AMANT: One, last year we opened on the 16th, we closed on the 4th. The year before we opened on the 12th, I think it was; I don't remember when we closed it. The year before that my memory is not clear. It may have been a little later, but I think what we should do here is follow the law. Whatever date you decide to open, the law calls for a minimum of 50 days, and I would recommend that what we do is set the seasons for a minimum of 50 days with an option to extend until such time as we determine there are significant white shrimp in the area and that we are in a position to protect them.

There may be some instances where, if there are no white shrimp showing up, particularly east of the River or in some other areas, we might even extend it beyond that.

The problem with this thing is that it is a little bit difficult to try to put all this stuff together and then set it along with the moon and the north wind and the fronts and stuff that come in. I can't get it all put together that good. If I could I would. We try to pick an average date and I think that that is the best we can do. If you see fit to operate or take another position, that is fine with me, but I do think we need some options at the end of the season particularly to close it down if we have to, to extend it, and this depends on a number of things.

If the industry has made a good catch, if they have done a lot of fishing, they are usually willing to slow down and wait for the white crop, but if they are running short, sometimes they want to keep pushing and make a few extra bucks. Of course, here again we keep getting involved in economics which I don't think your technical people can afford to do. I mean, if we begin to try to adjust this to set prices or take care of this or that or the other thing, we are going to stay in trouble because we are not economists, we

don't really know what the status of the industry is economically, and if we attempt to do so, we more than likely are going to hurt one man and help another. So, what we are trying to do when we recommend is to give you some information on the animals themselves.

That does not mean that any man who comes up here is not telling you the truth because he is looking at it from his point of view and from his local area and he may be absolutely right. It is just that it is a little difficult for us to agree with 15 or 20 people that have differences of opinion. We just can't make it all match up.

With this, I would suggest that I will let you make the decision this morning.

THE CHAIRMAN: Does anybody else wish to be heard this morning?

MR. LAPEYRE: I would like to say just a word or two about it. It is sort of a quandary because certainly I don't dispute the findings that Dr. St. Amant's biologists have made with respect to the size of the shrimp. There are a couple of other considerations which, as Doc

properly pointed out, we are really not in too good a position to take into consideration but to the extent that we can, I think we might at least discuss it.

There is this phase of the moon change thing which will occur, as I understand it, on the 19th --

FROM THE FLOOR: 22nd.

MR. LAPEYRE: Is it the 22nd? The argument has been made to me that if we were to delay it until the 22nd in Zone 2 that we might well be confronted with the same glut situation that occurred last year, which obviously was undesirable. I personally don't feel that there is a great difference in the overall impact on the outcome of the season whether we open it on the 15th or the 22nd, in terms of the net result, but in terms of perhaps trying to prevent the occurrence of an overproduction at the opening, there may be some advantage to the opening on the 15th in Zone 2.

In doing so, I am essentially gambling because, as Doc pointed out, if we were to be

blessed with good warm weather between now and the 15th, it is quite possible that the numbers of shrimp that would be marketable would be there and we would have a good production of good size shrimp that would have justified the opening on that date.

On the other hand, if we continue to get cold weather, the opening on the 15th would be a mistake, so it is a question of knowing what is going to happen between now and the 15th weather-wise, and I personally don't claim any expertise in that area.

On balance, on balance I would have to say that I recommend the opening of the 15th and I would offer that in the form of a motion at this time. I will if there is no further discussion to be had on the subject, but that would be my thinking right now, Mr. Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: Any other comments?

MR. DUPUY: Mr. Chairman, you have a comment over there.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, sir. Come forward and state your name, please, sir, and who you

represent.

MR. ROLAND TROSCLAIR: I am from Area 3. After the comment of Mr. Lapeyre, if the Commission does go with the May 15 area, Area 3 would like to be opened on the 20th, the Saturday, because we do have a full moon on the 22nd and the tide usually runs two to three days before the full moon, and to get full benefit of a moon if you decide to open on the 15th, Area 3 would like a 20th opening instead of a 22nd or 29th, either one. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much, sir. Anyone else?

(No response)

Do any Commission members have any more comments?

MR. DUPUY: Mr. Chairman, I have an observation. It appeared yesterday from the comments made and so far this morning, only one person has spoken, except this gentleman just now, for earlier than the 29th in Zones 1 and 3. If we open -- you know, there was a good bit of criticism from two people yesterday with regard to opening small areas and having everybody concentrate

in the same place and eliminating the resource -- if we open on the 15th in one zone and there is a two-week period between the 15th and 29th for the other two zones to open, there may be overfishing, if you will, in one zone which probably wouldn't occur if there was only one week of gap between the 22nd and the 29th.

THE CHAIRMAN: The boats out of Zone 3 and Zone 1 probably won't come into Zone 2 in great numbers with a week spread but if there is a two-week spread, then you think they will get in there pretty thick?

MR. DUPUY: I would think that there may occur substantial overfishing.

THE CHAIRMAN: That is the same problem the man was talking about yesterday over in Vermilion Bay with all the boats.

MR. DUPUY: Dr. St. Amant, would you have any comments to make with regard to a May 22 statewide opening? Along the same lines of overfishing in areas.

DR. ST. AMANT: Well, I don't know how to answer this question. We try to work with the

industry and anything we do actually is in a sense trial or experimental, and after we try these things, if they don't work we have no objection to changing.

Now the reason we went with three zones was at the request of some of the industry members. It appeared from the data, and there is no question about this, the shrimp appear in an area between the delta of the Mississippi River and the Atchafalaya system about two to three weeks and sometimes four weeks earlier than they do east and west of the river. Frequently we are finding shrimp that we can measure and catch in the central zone when we don't find a thing east of the river and you wonder if there are any shrimp out that at all.

If you go from the river east and west as far as Galveston Bay or as far as Mobile Bay, you find this change in dates. That is why Texas runs nearly a month later than us because their shrimp really come in that late.

We can't change this. So, we started out working on a zone system several years ago and

it appeared up until this year that this was a more efficient way to operate. Now we have suddenly become, at least some of the industry people feel like this is not a good way to operate, that it causes problems internally in the industry, that is, with respect to overcrowding in areas, with respect to whether or not the factories are loaded up or whether you start fishing at the same time.

If this is a real problem and it can be measured or if somebody can show us where the problem is, I don't have any objection to changing. Now you have got two recommendations on the floor right now from the three zones. You have got one from Zone 3 for the 20th, I guess it is. You have at least from Zone 1 for the 22nd and you have got one from Zone 2 for the 15th.

We presented our data. These people represent the industry and actually they are the ones gambling their money. I am not gambling it. I don't have a dime in a shrimp boat and I don't have enough money to buy shrimp most of the time and the thing is that even last year when we

opened on the 15th, some people seem to forget what happens. We did have a lot of problems and overcrowding, but you had a bumper year, but you forget we got criticized pretty good because the shrimp were too small.

I don't know where you go on a deal like this. If you want to gamble and the Commission wants to gamble with you, it is your money, your boats, have at it. All we have done and I think we are going to continue to do it is to offer you the information the best we can and we are going to try to project it to the best extent we can project it, and in a sense you are taking a calculated risk; I am not taking it and I suspect the Commission is not taking it. They are trying to give you a fair shake.

The problem that gets us is, now there were 250 or 300 people here yesterday and not many people opened their mouth. The only people that spoke up were talking about white shrimp, they didn't even talk about the brown shrimp.

THE CHAIRMAN: And they all seemed to be satisfied with the 22nd and 29th.

DR. ST. AMANT: They didn't open their mouths, didn't do anything. Now today, less than 24 hours later, we have got three different opinions, and it makes it a little difficult for gentlemen like this to make a decision and it even makes it worse for me because I am not always sure what the industry wants and what they are driving at. It would help --

THE CHAIRMAN: I am not sure that they know themselves what they want. I know I can't determine it.

DR. ST. AMANT: My personal feeling is and what the data is is what I say. We are not taking the risk. The industry takes this risk. It is their money, it is their equipment, and if you want to go with that recommendation, you are not going to hurt my feelings.

MR. WILLE: Dr. St. Amant and members of the Commission, I feel that the technical data that was produced yesterday, as far as I am concerned, was overwhelming. I am with Dr. St. Amant, I can hardly afford to buy shrimp, let alone invest in shrimp, and I would like to make a motion

right now --

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Wille, let me have a little more input. There are some more people who want to speak and I would rather --

DR. ST. AMANT: Let me make a point, please, sir. I wish the Commission would not think of this as "my" season or "my" recommendations in that personal sense or even the recommendations of the biologists. We are paid, whether or not we are well paid is a moot question, but we are paid and we develop the data and we do the best we can to analyze it, and the data is public information for the Commission and for the industry. We tell you what we see. If you want to gamble on it, I don't care whether you gamble.

I mean, while I appreciate the position of the Commission members who would like to vote directly for what I recommend, I don't think this is necessary at all. I think it is important that the industry have an input but it is also important that they realize that they are making the decision in a deal like this, that I am not always making it. I am taking the safest way out. Let's



be honest about it. The reason I recommend these latest dates is because I am pretty sure that by that date the shrimp are going to be marketable. If you go any time earlier than that, you are taking a calculated risk. Like I say, it is their money they are fooling with.

The only thing is, it has always worried me, not only about the shrimp industry but oysters and the whole works, you never know whether we are listening to the majority of the industry or whether we are listening to a few individual opinions, and this makes it bad. If we are making a decision here today on one or two individual opinions and the majority of the industry went away from here yesterday with something else, expecting the 22nd, or if they think it should be the 22nd, then we get a kickback on it, but as I say, I have no feeling on this except to say that the data is yours, it is public information and I hope you make the most out of it.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, sir, Mr. Authement, and then this gentleman back in the back is next. You come on, you had your hand up first. Move up



front so we can be ready.

MR. LEROY AUTHEMENT: In answer to the gentleman's question about overfishing, I figure that my area of Terrebonne Parish, as I was saying, is a productive area, a producing area of at least 60 percent of the coastal Louisiana shrimps and last year, what I mean not just last year, I mean that is all the time. Terrebonne Parish is one of the best fishing areas in the state and I am sure everybody will agree with this.

At first the influx of outsiders, they don't bother us that much because we have them every year, because they can make more money in Terrebonne Parish than they do if they stay in their own area. You have a certain amount of fellows that stay in their own area but those that are used to migrating to Terrebonne Parish, no matter when it is going to open, they will be there. The fellows from Lafitte, they are already starting to move down there, waiting for the season, that generally trawl in Terrebonne Parish. They move down there for the spring season and they don't move back to their own home until after the shrimp

season in December.

And last year, on the first day, I have a catch of four barrels and on the last day I had a catch of nine and a half barrels, so I don't really believe that hurt us so much.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

MR. DUPUY: What do you think about a Saturday opening? There was a suggestion this morning about a Saturday opening.

MR. AUTHEMENT: Definitely not. I would have all my people that I think that I am representing on my back if we would open on a Saturday.

THE CHAIRMAN: We are going to open on Saturday then!

MR. AUTHEMENT: We have enough oddballs on Monday without putting up with it on Saturday.

THE CHAIRMAN: We are going to open on Saturday then; I am sorry; get them all on your back!

FROM THE FLOOR: The 15th.

THE CHAIRMAN: You know, we are talking about other areas and people coming into our area and this, that and the other. Thank God we live in

America where a man can move where he wants to move. I hear you people in the audience in the shrimping business, fishing business, talking about people coming here, foreigners coming here from out of state, foreigners coming in here from one part of the state to another. Of course, we don't think much about it when we leave our homes and go to New Orleans and get some work done or go to Baton Rouge and do some work or go to Mobile or Texas or somewhere else, that's OK when we go over there and do these things, get a job and go to work, but somebody else comes down here and wants to do a little fishing, that's terrible.

Yes, sir. Would you state your name and who you represent, please.

MR. RONALD COLLINS: I represent Quality Seafood and about 250 fishermen. We deal mostly out in Lafourche Parish and we would like to see the season open for the 15th.

Dr. St. Amant stated a little while ago that if we want to gamble and open the season later than the 15th, well, that is up to us. Well, really if you open the season down there later, you

are just taking a chance of the shrimp going out to the Gulf. Our season is now and that is when we would like to see it open.

MR. LAPEYRE: I am sorry, I didn't hear. What is your area? Where do you live?

MR. COLLINS: Lafourche Parish.

MR. LAPEYRE: Lafourche. You recommend the 15th?

MR. COLLINS: Yes. I was here a little late, that is all.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Does anyone else wish to be heard?

MR. LAPEYRE: I would just like to put a question to those in Areas 1 and 3. Presently my thinking is that we go with an opening date of the 15th on Zone 2 and the 29th on Zones 1 and 3, and I want to know, I would like an expression as to whether that would create any problems for the people in Zones 1 and 3.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, sir. Would you come on up, please, sir. This is on tape this morning.

MR. MILTON DUDENHEFER: I thought I had a big enough mouth to cover the tape!

I would like to cover two things that we seem to get off on another direction here. Areas 1 and 3 are far apart and this was the idea of the three-area concept, to give everybody a chance in that area since the shrimp do grow at different rates in the different areas, a chance for the fishermen to possibly get their area open as they see it. In years past Area 2, shrimp grew much quicker than mainly I would say Area 1 and Area 3 but many a time Area 2 got their season opened as early as the 8th or the 13th and our shrimp were not even moving in yet and this hurt us very bad. That is when we pushed for a three-area concept.

Even though this year we are running a little bit closer and it would make some difference, I still think the best thing we ever done for the shrimping industry is go to a three-area concept because it gives everybody across the state a chance to get the season opened that was more favorable for his area because of the size of the shrimp in different areas and I really believe this is the best thing we ever went to and even though we have a few problems, we had it yesterday, but

look at the year we had, I mean last year.

THE CHAIRMAN: You don't object to problems?

MR. DUDENHEFER: I would like to have them problems every year! I think we should definitely not get away from our thinking of this three-area concept. It works well. We had problems last year but, like I say, that was good problems, and since we are not looking at that situation, I don't think we are going to have the crop of shrimp we had last year. That was one in many, many, many years, so I don't think we have a problem here at all. We are talking about different areas and that is the whole idea of different zones, having the season open in different areas, so I hope we would not move away from that three-area concept, even if the years come that we might open it across the state at the same time when the shrimp are growing at the same rate. But when it is a different rate it should be opened in different zones at different times without any problems. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

MR. LAPEYRE: I agree with you but what I



was wondering is whether or not a two-week space between the opening of Zone 2 and Zone 1, let's say, principally, would create a problem for those in Zone 1. Would that much delay in the opening of the Zone 1 season as compared to Zone 2 create a problem as far as you can see?

MR. DUDENHEFER: It would create somewhat of a problem with the boats moving into the opening zones but, on the other hand, it would create a problem to the other zones that would have to open their seasons earlier when their shrimp are not of a fair size, so we would have a two-ended --

THE CHAIRMAN: Switch-off.

MR. DUDENHEFER: -- situation there.

MR. LAPEYRE: It is my belief that people who are ready to fish on the date of the earliest opening, which is always, of course, Zone 2, will migrate to where the shrimp are, regardless of whether the situation is one where we open it by zones or whether we open it statewide.

MR. DUDENHEFER: This is true. Myself, when I fill my tanks up, my area is where my fuel



tanks take me, and right now, the season open or closed, I am fishing along the Gulf in open waters so I am going to migrate one way or the other to find a fishing area to make my living and I am sure other fishermen look at it the same way.

MR. LAPEYRE: I think that's right. The benefit that I see in keeping other zones closed when the growth of the shrimp in those areas does not justify trawling is that you do in fact protect those shrimp.

MR. DUDENHEFER: That's true and we get more out of the resource by having the proper dates and I do commend Dr. St. Amant on the information he brings up. I find he is running mighty good with his predictions every year. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Gentlemen, let me say this. This passes across my mind and, believe me, I am not in the shrimping business and not in the ice business and not promoting anybody, but for your own information and your own convenience, they have built a new ice plant in Berwick just across the river from Morgan City and it is before you get to the railroad bridge on the left, just I guess about

half a mile above the Intracoastal Canal there, so if you are in that area and need ice this year you can get it. Last year it was hard to come by. I pass that along as a little information, nothing else.

At this time the Chair is going to call for a motion. I think we have talked about it enough. Mr. Lapeyre, you said you wanted to make a motion?

MR. LAPEYRE: Yes. I would like to recommend what I have just indicated, opening Zone 2 May 15 and opening Zones 1 and 3 May 29.

THE CHAIRMAN: Gentlemen, you hear the motion. Do I have a second?

MR. WILLE: I will second it.

THE CHAIRMAN: Seconded by Mr. Wille. Any further discussion?

MR. LUTTRELL: Mr. Chairman, I would like to amend that motion to accept the recommendations of Dr. St. Amant, the 22nd and the 29th.

THE CHAIRMAN: Do we have a second to the amendment?

MR. RIGGS: I will second the amendment.

THE CHAIRMAN: Gentlemen, we have a motion and a second, and an amendment and a second. Is there discussion on the amendment?

(No response)

I will call for a vote on the amendment. All in favor of the amendment, say aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

THE CHAIRMAN: Let me have a little show of hands.

(Show of hands)

Three. Any opposed?

(Show of hands)

Three opposed.

FROM THE FLOOR: Break the tie!

THE CHAIRMAN: The Chairman votes nay. The amendment loses.

You monkeys have lined me up this morning!

OK, now we will vote on the original amendment -- excuse me, the original motion. All in favor of the motion say aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

THE CHAIRMAN: Any opposed?

MR. RIGGS: Opposed.

MR. LUTTRELL: The motion as amended?

THE CHAIRMAN: No. We voted on the amendment first. It lost.

MR. LUTTRELL: The amendment lost?

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, sir.

MR. RIGGS: Could I comment on the discussion, Mr. Chairman, on the motion?

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, sir.

MR. RIGGS: I would like to say this, that for the Commission to go against the recommendations of the biologists I think would be a mistake and --

THE CHAIRMAN: We have made these mistakes before!

MR. RIGGS: -- and they have said we have a slow growth of shrimp this year, due to the cold weather, and recommended the 22nd in Zone 2 and and 1 and 3 the 29th, and I know from past experience in Zone 3 that by opening early they destroy a lot of small shrimp, and I am vigorously opposed of changing the date of the recommendation of Dr. St. Amant and I would just like to go on record as favoring their recommendations.



THE CHAIRMAN: All right, gentlemen, we have a motion and a second.

MR. LUTTRELL: I would like to make a statement also. With a delay of two weeks you are going to have the piling up of boats in all of the zones the same as you did for the white shrimp because that is enough time to move from one side of the state to the other with the two weeks opening. For that reason I can't go with a split of two weeks.

THE CHAIRMAN: Gentlemen, we have a motion and a second and I am calling for a vote. How do you vote, Mr. Gilbert?

MR. GILBERT: Yea.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Dupuy?

MR. DUPUY: Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Lapeyre?

MR. LAPEYRE: Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Wille?

MR. WILLE: Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Luttrell?

MR. LUTTRELL: No.

MR. RIGGS: I vote no.



THE CHAIRMAN: The vote is four to two in favor of, so the motion passes. The season will be May 15 and May 29. May 15 on Area 2 and May 29 on Areas 1 and 3.

MR. WILLE: God help you if you are wrong, Leroy!

THE CHAIRMAN: Leroy, if you are wrong, don't come back here next year now; we're not listening to that stuff next year!

DR. ST. AMANT: Gentlemen, one thing now. We are going to open this season for 50 days with an option to extend or close, depending on what we find at the end of the 50 days, and even beyond the 60 days in Areas 1 or 3 if there is no white shrimp problems, so let's understand what we are talking about.

Mr. Chairman, I guess that concludes the shrimp portion.

MR. AUTHEMENT: Dr. St. Amant, if the white shrimp show up before the 50 days and we want to close it --

DR. ST. AMANT: No, we can't do that. The law says 50 days. Yes, sir. You had 50 days

last year.

THE CHAIRMAN: Dr. St. Amant, are you not asking us to make this closing an open-ended deal?

DR. ST. AMANT: The law calls for a minimum of 50 days.

THE CHAIRMAN: But you can close it for 10 days or two weeks or whatever?

DR. ST. AMANT: We cannot close it generally before 50 days unless we have some evidence that there is a catastrophic problem associated with shrimp where you are going to lose the population, but we can't close it for any other reason.

Now, between 50 and 60 days, the Department has the option to leave open or close at will.

We also have an additional law on the books that allows us to open seasons beyond these regular seasons in certain areas. That is what gets us into arguments in areas like Vermilion Bay and we have been doing it around Breton Sound a few times and over in Catherine and in the Rigolets in some areas. Now by and large what I am just doing is going on record today so there will be

no question that it is legal that we are going to exercise these options that if the shrimp are there and if they are marketable and if we don't have a problem with small shrimp, we are probably going to look to either extending or closing the season, depending on what is best for the industry and what input we get from the industry.

That is all we are saying and I would like it for the record. That is the main thing, so it will show in the minutes.

FROM THE FLOOR: What about opening time?

DR. ST. AMANT: The opening time will not be changed this year. We had some comment on that yesterday about whether or not to open at noon or six a.m. or something else, but the legal day starts at 12 midnight or 12:01 and we are going to go with that.

Now, if the industry has any real feeling about opening at midnight, then they should get together and come in and present a unified front and we will go the legislature some place. However, in the area of Calcasieu Lake and over in that area, they have no night fishing, but that

is a special law. The rest of the state does have night fishing. Let's get that straight.

One other thing I would like to mention to you while I am up here. There has been some discussion off and on about using four trawls and tandem trawls and all this kind of stuff, these hook-ups. We recognize that in some areas off-shore and one place and another that you can use four trawls and they are more efficient than two. We have no objection for any man going into an efficient situation, but inside waters in Louisiana, and this includes Chandeleur Sound, is restricted to either one trawl and in Chandeleur Sound a double rig. Now until the law is changed, using four trawls would be illegal, so don't let somebody talk you into trying it. If you want to do it, it is fine with us, but you need to go to the legislature and change this thing so that you can operate these multiple trawls in some manner.

I know they work in deeper water. I don't really know what they do in real shallow water like we operate inside. It might not work at all if you got too involved with it and you

might get hung up with all these boats out there, but this is your option. I am just calling to your attention that it is illegal at the present time.

For those of you in the Rigolets area, there was a joint resolution passed yesterday in both the House and the Senate, clearing up the problem with the crabbing in Lake Pontchartrain. I don't know when that is effective. Now you might want to run that down. I guess somebody might have to sign that, like the Governor or the Secretary of State, but it did pass and you are home free on that, and we are home free, thank Heaven.

FROM THE FLOOR: Dr. St. Amant, one question. What was your projected figure of percentage of marketable shrimp for Zone 2 on the 15th?

DR. ST. AMANT: Well, about 20 percent, I think, or 16 percent, something like that.

FROM THE FLOOR: 16 percent?

DR. ST. AMANT: Yes, but now let's get one thing straight. These are projections based on the present growing rate and these gentlemen as well as all our people know that growth is not always a straight line. When the temperature goes

up, the growth tends to steepen on you. We have had times when we have recommended periods and the shrimp began to grow faster than we projected. On the other hand, you are always taking a risk, and if they want to take that risk, then --

THE CHAIRMAN: Gentlemen, I want to tell you, I have listened to these discussions now for five or six years and when you get down to a week's time one way or the other, it is by guess and by God and you can't be that accurate. I don't think it really makes a lot of difference because I think there is 50 percent on one side and 50 percent on the other, as you just saw demonstrated when they made me break the tie. Depending on the weather, as Dr. St. Amant says, and on the rain and the cloudiness and seven or eight variables which the Big Man Upstairs controls, we have no control over, and we might well have made the right decision to open the 15th this morning, and if we have a lot of cloudy weather and cool weather, we have made a terrible mistake. On the other hand, let's say if it gets real warm --

MR. DUPUY: Doyle, not talking about

mistakes but if you catch as many shrimp at the end of the season as you do at the beginning, it can't be that kind of mistake.

THE CHAIRMAN: That's right. This way you get a chance to get them before they get in the Gulf and if you wait and let them get in the Gulf, run toward the Gulf for a week and you don't get them, then you have got problems.

(The full text of the  
resolution is here made  
a part of the record.)

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission has reviewed the requests of the fishermen, industry and sportsmen, as well as the biological predictions and recommendations of the biologists of the Seafood Division,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission does hereby declare the 1978 Spring Brown Shrimp season to be as follows:

ZONE 1 - Mississippi State line to South Pass, at the mouth of the Mississippi River, including Lake Pontchartrain, opens May 29, 12:01 a.m.

ZONE 2 - South Pass, at the mouth of the Mississippi River, to the western shore of Vermilion Bay, opens May 15, 12:01 a.m.

ZONE 3 - Western shore of Vermilion Bay to the Sabine River/Texas State Line, opens May 29, 12:01 a.m.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary be and is hereby authorized to extend and to close the season after the 50-day period.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the season be either extended or closed depending upon available technical data concerning the presence or absence of small white shrimp.

THE CHAIRMAN: I have talked enough



about shrimp. The next meeting will be in Lake Charles on May 19 and 20. It will be to receive input on the hunting seasons, set the dates. For years this was held in Alexandria. We have held it in other areas in the last few years. Then on the 22nd we are going to Bossier City and take input from the people in North Louisiana.

Dr. St. Amant, I believe you have two permits this morning you want to present.

DR. ST. AMANT: Yes, sir, I have two permits. Let me take the shorter one first and then we will talk about the other one.

I have a request for renewal of a permit from Vicon, Inc., to renew a permit for dredging for fill material in the vicinity of Harahan, Louisiana. This permit has been operated in satisfactory fashion. I have reviewed their accounting and they are up to date on their accounts. They meet all the requirements set forth by the Commission, and I would recommend that we reissue this permit for a period of one year at the appropriate royalty, which in this case is 10 cents per yard.

THE CHAIRMAN: You have heard the recommendation. Do I have a motion?

MR. WILLE: So move.

MR. LAPEYRE: Second.

THE CHAIRMAN: Moved by Mr. Wille, seconded by Mr. Lapeyre. All in favor say aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

THE CHAIRMAN: Any opposed?

(No response)

So ordered.

(The full text of the resolution is here made a part of the record.)

BE IT RESOLVED that the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries does hereby grant permission to VICON, INC. to remove fill material from the Mississippi River in Hahnville, St. Charles Parish, Louisiana, for a period of one year from May 2, 1978 to May 2, 1979, at a royalty rate of 10 cents per cubic yard.

DR. ST. AMANT: Now the last item is one



that we have been working with for several months now and I think we have finally straightened it out to a point where I can present it to the Commission without fear of any problems with the way the application is made.

Mr. Bernie Beerman is here today, representing three companies which he is President of. One of them is Boat River and Canal from Lake Providence, the other is Louisiana Land and Water, Inc. in Lake Providence, and the third one is Production Aggregate, Inc., Lake Providence, all of them having the same address.

Now in making the application Mr. Beerman has submitted a great deal of information to us and his application now meets all of the requirements set forth by the Commission and in some instances exceeds them. He has presented us with a feasibility study by a consulting firm on what he is trying to do. He has furnished us with copies of his Articles of Incorporation and he has furnished us with the various and sundry information on his dredge, where he proposes to dredge and what he proposes to do with his company.

Now, in view of this, I find that he meets all the requirements set forth by the Commission and I would recommend that we grant these permits.

I would like to comment in two areas, however. In the original permit and in some of the drawings, he has requested dredging sites that are not in the water bottoms and therefore the Wildlife and Fisheries Department or Commission has no legal authority to issue permits in such areas, so I would recommend we only issue permits at the sites he indicates but under or below the mean low water level. This is our area of concern and our area of authority.

He has asked for seven, approximately seven sites in each company, a total of some 20 or 21 or 22 sites which I do not think it is necessary to reiterate each one but they cover an area of the Mississippi River from about Mile 200 on up to Mile 455 or 500, up above Lake Providence. At first indication I questioned the need for this many sites, particularly in view of the fact that Mr. Beerman has only one dredge, but after



discussing the matter with him, he does have a logical plan for using them and this plan is as follows. He feels that his dredge is highly mobile, that he can move up and down the river, that he would prefer to be dredging wherever the contract is because it reduces the cost of transportation and this is a known fact that in dredging any of these items, the big cost is in transportation, not so much in the base cost, and he will have problems with the Corps of Engineers if he comes in at periodic intervals to get these particular sites, so what he had attempted to do was to set up all the possible sites he might use, get a permit from us for each site and then go to the Corps of Engineers and get the appropriate companion permit.

Now, in view of this, it is easy enough to understand what he proposes to do. I have no objection to this procedure. I would call to Mr. Beerman's attention, however, and I would like for it to be in the record, that if you have this many permits, they are accountable individually, which means that each one will have to be accounted for each month because we run a separate accounting

system on each one. What is going to end up is there will be one or two permits operating and a whole group of them inoperative and we will need paper on each one of them, Mr. Beerman, in order for us to know that they are inoperative. Otherwise, you are going to run into problems with the auditing. But if you are willing to undertake that much paper work, I guess we can handle it on the other hand.

In view of this, Mr. Chairman, after much trying to determine how these permits were arrived at, I would recommend that we grant them for a period of one year at the appropriate royalties. Now, if he is using washed gravel, this will be I think 20 cents a yard and sand -- is it 30? Whatever you passed in the last meeting, in the March meeting, will be placed in the individual permits.

THE CHAIRMAN: Doc, these are non-exclusive permits, right?

DR. ST. AMANT: None of these permits is exclusive and Mr. Beerman is to understand that if tomorrow morning somebody comes in and wants an equivalent number of permits in the exact same



sites and they produce the same amount of evidence, we will grant them the same permits in the same sites. The only restriction any permit has is that you cannot work within 300 feet or 300 yards of some other dredge. In other words, you can't move in the same hole he is dredging in, but you can move into the same section of the river.

So, with this in mind and since the permits are only for one year, I would remind you again, don't wait for the last month if you are going to renew these things. Bring them in here at least two months early and let's start the ball rolling so we will have no problem. With that clearly understood, Mr. Chairman, I would recommend we issue this gentleman the appropriate permits.

If you would like to ask him some questions, he is here at my request today.

THE CHAIRMAN: I did talk to Mr. Beerman earlier, Dr. St. Amant. The Chair has the recommendation. Do I have a motion?

MR. WILLE: I so move.

MR. LAPEYRE: Second.

THE CHAIRMAN: Moved by Mr. Wille,  
seconded by Mr. Lapeyre. All in favor say aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

THE CHAIRMAN: Any opposed?

MR. GILBERT: Yes, one opposed.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Gilbert opposes it.  
The motion is carried. So ordered.

(The full text of the  
resolution is here made  
a part of the record.)

BE IT RESOLVED that the  
Louisiana Department of Wildlife and  
Fisheries does hereby grant permission  
to LOUISIANA LAND AND WATER, INC., to  
dredge sand and gravel from the bed of  
the Mississippi River at the following  
described locations:

- (1) On the right side of the navigation  
channel at Opossum Point from  
Mile 501.3 to Mile 502.0 AHP,  
East Carroll Parish, Map No. 29.
- (2) On the right side of the navigation  
channel at Fitler Bend from Mile



476.0 to Mile 477.8, East Carroll Parish, Map No. 30.

- (3) On the right side of the navigation channel from Mile 461.0 to Mile 463.5 AHP, East Carroll Parish, Maps Nos. 31 and 32.
- (4) On the right side of the navigation channel at Centennial Point from Mile 438.5 to Mile 441.5 AHP, Madison Parish, Map No. 33.
- (5) Along the left side of the navigation channel from Mile 420.5 to Mile 423.8 AHP, Madison Parish, Map No. 34.
- (6) On the right side of the navigation channel from Mile 344.5 to Mile 347.6 AHP, Concordia Parish, Map No. 39.
- (7) On the right side of the navigation channel along the North and the East side of the St. Maurice Towhead from Mile 271.0 to Mile 273.5 AHP, Point Coupee Parish, Map No. 43.
- (8) On the left side of the navigation



channel and along the west side of Profit Island from Mile 348.7 to Mile 351.5 AHP, West Baton Rouge Parish, Map No. 45;

for a period of one year from May 2, 1978 to May 2, 1979.

THE CHAIRMAN: Is there any other business to come before the Commission this morning. Mr. Leroy, you will be heard for 15 seconds.

MR. AUTHEMENT: It is going to take a little bit more than that. A while ago you said we had put you over the barrel with the season. Well, I wish to impose and put you over a bigger barrel. Right now my representative from Terrebonne Parish have a bill and I think we will need your help in the desperate situation of legislation that came out last year, unaware of the impact of the wrong use on the webbing.

The revision on 409 on seine size and the size of the inner layer of the trammel net mesh is ridiculous. We had a standard size minimum 2-7/8 inch on the seine and the inner layer on the trammel net up to the last day of March. Now on



the first we had a law that came in effect, a maximum of two-inch. No minimum. Now the definition of a seine is vague. It is a strip of webbing with a bag on it. That is the definition of a fish seine. Now for \$20 I don't care when you all open the August season, I can go back in operation for \$20, with any size webbing up to two-inch, and put a 300-foot wing on my butterfly net and operate for \$20 and devastate our natural resources? Those rules were strictly overlooking preservation.

Now I recommended to Mr. Don an inch and a half, three-inch stretch, because you can drop that in the water, your small shrimp and small specks, that protects the specks and the reds. The smaller webbing than a two-inch stretch mesh, can you figure the devastation in fingerlings and yearling trouts and the other fish? There is no way they can go through that.

THE CHAIRMAN: I recommend you talk to Dr. St. Amant and Mr. Angelle concerning this and Dick Yancey. They handle the legislative stuff in Baton Rouge.



MR. AUTHEMENT: Because with the wrong use of this law, it could have such a devastating effect that we could destroy everything in two years.

THE CHAIRMAN: Oh, I think we would shut it down before it got to be that devastating. We would find a loophole, too. Every time we write a law, get a law written, somebody finds a loophole around it and then somehow we always find a loophole to enforce it, too.

MR. AUTHEMENT: But that is too much of a big hole.

THE CHAIRMAN: Has anybody else got anything else to say this morning before we close this meeting?

We thank you for your attendance, appreciate your conduct this morning.

The meeting stands adjourned.

(Whereupon, at 11:15 o'clock  
a.m. the meeting was adjourned.)

Kathryn G. Chamberlin,  
Reporter.



C E R T I F I C A T E

I, the undersigned reporter, DO HEREBY CERTIFY that the above and foregoing ( 60 pages of typewritten matter) is a true and correct transcription of the tape recording and of the stenographic notes of the proceedings herein, transcribed by me, at the time and place hereinbefore noted.

New Orleans, Louisiana, this 29 day of  
May, 1978.

*Kathryn G. Chamberlin*

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Kathryn G. Chamberlin,  
Reporter.